

EMPLOYMENT PLAN 2014
UNITED STATES



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1. Employment and labor market outlook

The U.S. economy continued to grow in 2013 with real GDP increasing 3.1 percent.¹ Growth in consumer spending, homebuilding, and exports supported aggregate demand growth, which contributed to a stronger labor market. During 2013, private establishments added 2.4 million new jobs, and the unemployment rate fell by 1.2 percentage points to 6.7 percent by the end of the year. Since then, the unemployment rate fell further and measured 5.8 percent in October 2014.

The outlook for the near future is promising with numerous indicators pointing to a pickup in economic growth. The Administration expects real GDP growth to increase to 2.6 percent over the four quarters of 2014 and for the unemployment rate to fall 1.0 percentage point over the course of the year. The latest projections (issued in September) from the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) indicate that participants expect the unemployment rate to be between 5.4 percent and 5.6 percent at the end of 2015 and between 5.1 percent and 5.4 percent at the end of 2016. The FOMC participants also see longer-run GDP growth at 2.0 to 2.3 percent a year.

¹ This figure reflects growth from fourth quarter 2012 to fourth quarter 2013. The statistical information in this employment plan was drawn from multiple sources, including the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Economic Report of the President, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the FOMC website, the 2015 President's Budget, and from statements made by the President and Secretary of Labor.

Table 1: Economic and labor market conditions, 2008 (Left Hand Side) and 2013 (Right Hand Side)								
	GDP growth (Q4/Q4) ²		GDP per capita (USD terms) ³		Employment Growth ⁴		Employment to population ratio ⁵	
United States	-2.8%	3.1%	\$48,708	\$49,804	-2.6%	1.7%	62.2%	58.6%
G20 Average ⁶	1.4%	1.9%	\$25,339	\$26,243	1.1%	0.9%	57.7%	57.1%
	Unemployment rate ⁷		Incidence of long-term unemployment ⁸		Youth unemployment rate ⁹		Youth employment to population ratio ¹⁰	
United States	5.8%	7.4%	19.7%	37.6%	12.8%	15.5%	51.2%	46.5%
G20 Average	6.3%	6.1%	24.1%	31.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Labor force participation rate ¹¹		Female participation rate ¹²		Prime age (16 to 64) participation rate ¹³			
United States	66%	63.2%	59.5%	57.2%	79.2%	77%		
G20 Average	60.2%	60.3%	50%	51.8%	70.4%	71.2%		

² GDP growth for 2008 was calculated using fourth quarter 2007 to fourth quarter 2008 and for 2013 using fourth quarter 2012 to fourth quarter 2013 real GDP chained to 2009 dollars from Bureau of Economic Analysis.

³ Real GDP per capita in chained 2009 dollars, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

⁴ These are December to December rates of change for 2008 and 2013, respectively. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

⁵ Table B-11 Civilian population and labor force, 1929-2014, Economic Report of the President, 2014.

⁶ All G20 averages are from ILO and OECD calculations.

⁷ Table B-11, Ibid.

⁸ Table 31 Unemployed persons by duration of unemployment, age, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, annual average, 2008 and 2013, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Please note that the U.S. considers long term unemployment to be 27 weeks or more. For 52 weeks or more, long-term unemployment was 10.6 percent in 2008 and 25.9 percent in 2013.

⁹ Youth are 16-24 year olds. Specifically, the unemployment rate for 16-19 year olds was 18.7 percent (2008) and 22.9 percent (2013) and for 20-24 year olds it was 10.2 percent (2008) and 12.8 percent (2013). Bureau of Labor Statistics.

¹⁰ Youth are 16-24 year olds. Specifically, the employment-population ratio for 16-19 year olds was 32.6 percent (2008) and 26.6 percent (2013) and for 20-24 year olds it was 66.8 percent (2008) and 61.7 percent (2013). Bureau of Labor Statistics.

¹¹ Table 3. Household data annual averages: Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by age, sex, and race. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

¹² Table 2. Employment status of the civilian non-institutional population 16 years and over by sex, 1973-2013, annual averages. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

¹³ These figures are for ages 16-64 though we consider prime age adults to be 25-64 year olds. The labor force participation rate for 25-64 year olds was 83.1 percent in 2008 and 81 percent in 2013. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 2: Key policy indicators, 2008 (Left Hand Side) and 2013 (Right Hand Side)						
	Minimum wage (% of mean wage) ¹⁴		Gini coefficient ¹⁵		High school completion rate ¹⁶	
United States	28.8%	32.5%	0.403	0.477	74.7%	78.6%
G20 Average	34.9%	34.9%	0.341	0.376	76.5%	78.9%
	Informal employment rate ¹⁷		Collective bargaining coverage ¹⁸		Year 12 attainment ¹⁹	
United States	n/a	n/a	13.7%	12.4%	87.6%	89.3%
G20 Average	n/a	42.2%	n/a	28.8%	69.8%	74.2%

Table 3: Labor market forecasts for 2012-2022 ²⁰	
Annual growth	
Employment	Labor force participation rate
1%	-0.3%

¹⁴ Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates from Bureau of Labor Statistics. The minimum wage increased from \$5.85 per hour to \$6.55 per hour on July 24, 2008. In 2013, the minimum wage was \$7.25 per hour. The numbers reflect the minimum wage as a percentage of the mean hourly wage during May of each year.

¹⁵ Table IE-2 Measures of individual earnings inequality for full-time, year-round workers by sex: 1967-2010, Census Bureau and Press Release on Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2012, Census Bureau. The Gini coefficient for 2012 is reported in the column for 2013, as it is the most recent available data.

¹⁶ The averaged freshman graduation rates provide an estimate of the percentage of students who receive a regular diploma within 4 years of entering ninth grade. The rates reported in the table are the graduation rate for academic years 2007-2008 (actual) and 2011-2012 (projected). As of May 28, 2014, the projected graduation rate for academic year 2012-2013 is not available. Digest of Education Statistics 2012, Table 122 High school graduates, by sex and control of school: Selected years 1869-70 through 2021-22.

¹⁷ Data are unavailable.

¹⁸ Percent of employment represented by unions, Union Membership (Annual) News Release, 2008 and 2013, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

¹⁹ Calculated using rates for those graduating high school or higher education over total population 18 and over from Table 1. Educational attainment of the population 18 years and over, by age, sex, race and Hispanic origins. Census Bureau.

²⁰ These are annual growth rates projected between 2012-2022 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

2. Employment challenges for United States

The U.S. labor market continues to recover from the Great Recession. While the unemployment rate has trended downward, significant obstacles remain for individuals seeking high-quality employment opportunities. The primary reason for labor market slack is sluggish growth in aggregate demand, but other factors like skills mismatches and difficulty accessing training programs may also have some effect on labor market participation for the long-term unemployed, women, youth, people with disabilities, and other groups. In addition to supporting aggregate demand, four of the major issues the United States plans to address over the coming years include: (1) reducing the number of long-term unemployed workers; (2) closing the gender gap in participation and earnings; (3) increasing employment opportunities for young people; and (4) increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

CHALLENGE: REDUCING LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT

Over the past 12 months, the number of long-term unemployed workers (27 weeks or longer) has decreased by 1.1 million, to 2.8 million. However, long-term unemployment still remains at historically high levels. As of October, the long-term unemployment rate in the United States was 2.0 percent of the workforce, double the pre-crisis average of 1.0 percent. Additionally, the long term-unemployed accounted for 32.7 percent of the total unemployed in October 2014. While older workers and persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented in the ranks of the long-term unemployed, research shows that the long-term unemployed are similar to the short-term unemployed with respect to educational attainment, gender, and industry and occupation.

The long-term unemployed face significant barriers to reemployment, including stigmatization in the hiring process. They are only half as likely to get a call-back interview as other job applicants who have been unemployed for short periods of time, even if their credentials are similar. The long-term unemployed are also more likely to become discouraged and to drop out of the workforce.

The Administration is undertaking a range of initiatives to reduce long-term unemployment, such as working with the private sector to develop a set of best practices for hiring and recruiting the long-term unemployed, reforming federal hiring practices, and initiating a \$150 million “Ready to Work Partnerships” grant program that will support innovative public-private partnerships efforts. In addition, the 2015 President’s Budget requests a \$158 million investment that would provide additional reemployment services for unemployment insurance beneficiaries, \$2 billion in mandatory funding to encourage states to adopt “Bridge to Work” programs and other work-based reforms in their state unemployment insurance programs, and \$4 billion for “Back to Work Partnerships” to connect the long-term unemployed to jobs. The Budget also proposes a New Career Pathways program, which would create a single program for displaced workers that would reach up to one million individuals a year with a set of core services. The Administration also continues to seek the extension of emergency unemployment compensation, which provides a critical safety net for unemployed workers.



CHALLENGE: CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN PARTICIPATION AND EARNINGS

Over the last 50 years, the labor force participation of women has increased by nearly 50 percent as a result of increased educational attainment, stronger anti-discrimination laws, and the introduction of family-friendly work practices. Despite this progress, significant challenges need to be addressed to further increase both the rate of women's participation in the workforce and the quality of women's employment. The labor force participation rate of women is lower than for men, 57 percent versus 69 percent, respectively. Furthermore, the aging of the Baby Boomer generation into retirement is likely to continue to exert substantial downward pressure on the overall labor force participation rate. Some of the labor market challenges women face include:

- (1) Gender pay gap: While the pay gap has steadily declined, median weekly earnings for full-time female workers are still only 82.2 percent of those of full-time male workers;
- (2) Occupational segregation: Women are overrepresented in jobs that pay low wages. Among workers who were paid hourly rates in 2013, about five percent of women had wages at or below the prevailing federal minimum wage, compared with about three percent of men;
- (3) Underrepresentation in entrepreneurship and executive positions: Women are less likely to be self-employed than men (5.5 percent versus 7.4 percent). Although female business ownership is growing, women still account for only about 30 percent of business owners. Women are also less likely to advance to executive positions in firms than their male counterparts, comprising only 4.8 percent of CEOs in the Fortune 500 and an estimated 37 percent of middle-management positions;
- (4) Work-life balance: About half of American workers lack access to paid sick leave and paid family leave for the birth of a child.

The Administration is working to address these challenges by:

- (1) Seeking to obtain passage of legislation to increase the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 per hour, and taking the first step in this direction with an executive order to increase the minimum wage for those working on federal contracts;
- (2) Expanding and making permanent tax credits for working families;
- (3) Ensuring that all families have access to preschool education;
- (4) Proposing funding to help states to establish paid leave programs;
- (5) Continuing to strongly enforce antidiscrimination and wage and hour laws and advocate for the passage of legislation that would help more women obtain equal pay for equal work;
- (6) Encouraging pay transparency by issuing Executive Order 13665, which prohibits federal contractors from retaliating against employees who discuss their compensation; and
- (7) Promoting compliance with equal pay laws, through Presidential Memorandum of April 8, 2014, requiring federal contractors to submit summary data on compensation by sex and race that will be used for more effective enforcement where discrepancies exist while reducing the burden on compliant contractors.

CHALLENGE: INCREASING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Unemployment remains high for youth in the labor market. In October 2014, the unemployment rate for individuals age 25-54 was 4.9 percent, but twice as high—10.5 percent—for individuals aged 20-24 and almost four times higher—18.6 percent—for individuals aged 16-19. Those with less education tend to do worse in terms of employment and earnings. A high school dropout can expect to earn about one-quarter less over a lifetime compared to a high school graduate and almost 60 percent less compared to a college graduate. Unemployment rates are also relatively elevated for those with lower educational attainment: the unemployment rate for high school dropouts age 25 and older was 7.9 percent in October 2014, compared to 5.7 percent for high school graduates, and 3.1 percent for college graduates.

The Administration is addressing these challenges by increasing flexibility for states and localities to improve their programming for disconnected youth. The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) recently awarded \$100 million in Youth CareerConnect grants, which will allow more than 20 schools and school districts to partner with local employers, community colleges, workforce investment boards, and other groups to provide students with rigorous academic curriculum that will also impart valuable real-world career skills. The 2015 President's Budget also includes \$2.5 billion in mandatory funding for Summer Jobs Plus, which would fund summer and year-round job opportunities for 600,000 youth. This year, under the Performance Partnership Pilots program, up to 10 states or localities will be able to combine funds from different agencies to implement activities and reforms to improve education and employment outcomes among disconnected youth.

CHALLENGE: INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The unemployment rate of individuals with disabilities is twice that of those without disabilities (11.3 percent versus 5.3 percent in October 2014). The labor force participation rate for people without disabilities is nearly three and a half times than those with disabilities (68.8 percent versus 20 percent in October 2014).

U.S. laws prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of disability, and USDOL develops policies and practices to increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. For example, USDOL administers grants that enhance access to the U.S. workforce system for people with disabilities, including through the Disability Employment Initiative, which helps people with disabilities to obtain needed employment and training services. USDOL also works to promote the employment of people with disabilities within the federal government and among federal contractors. In conjunction with other federal agencies, USDOL implements Executive Order 13548, which requires the federal government to hire an additional 100,000 workers with disabilities between 2010 and 2015. In September 2013, USDOL published new regulations, which set a nationwide seven percent goal for the employment of people with disabilities for all federal contractors.

The Administration is actively working to provide meaningful opportunities for self-sufficiency to individuals with disabilities. The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to workers with disabilities. Additionally, SSA offers a free, voluntary "Ticket to Work" program, which partners with Employer Networks to provide participants assistance in entering, re-entering and retaining gainful employment. The U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) provides funds to state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to provide a wide range of employment-related services designed to assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for and engage in gainful employment consistent with their needs, skills, and interests. Services include career counseling and exploration activities, financial support for postsecondary education, vocational training, and disability adjustment services and training.



3. Current policy settings and new commitments

BROAD ECONOMIC SETTINGS

As of October 2014, private establishments have added 10.6 million jobs over 56 straight months of job growth, but more work remains. To achieve a higher rate of economic and employment growth, the Administration is promoting an integrated set of policies designed to expand the productive economic base, strengthen the middle class, reverse the rise in income inequality, and enhance economic opportunity, including for women, while reducing the budget deficit.

Macroeconomic policy

The Administration is committed to supporting aggregate demand and economic growth by prioritizing government spending that finances productive public investments.

Under the long-term budget forecast, the U.S. government will reduce the deficit to about 1.6 percent of GDP.

The Administration's fiscal policy is designed to promote economic growth while at the same time reducing the budget deficit. The Administration has put forward numerous initiatives to support aggregate demand and economic growth by increasing investment in research, education, infrastructure, and other areas; increasing refundable tax credits for low-wage workers; raising the minimum wage; enacting a front-loaded, four-year surface transportation reauthorization bill that would help create jobs; and extending unemployment insurance for the more than 2 million people who saw their benefits expire at the end of 2013. According to the Office of Management and Budget, under the long-term budget forecast, the deficit would fall to about 1.6 percent of GDP by 2024, and debt would decline as a share of the economy.

Meanwhile, in other macroeconomic policy, the independent FOMC launched its current asset purchase program in the fall of 2012. The FOMC designed this program to put downward pressure on long-term interest rates, support mortgage markets, and promote a stronger economic recovery. As labor market conditions strengthened, the FOMC began reducing the pace of asset purchases in December 2013.

Regulation, finance, incentives, investment and entrepreneurialism

Under the Administration's proposed budget, the U.S. government would invest \$302 billion in infrastructure.

We will continue our efforts in supporting innovation and research, expanding access to capital, ensuring less costly or burdensome regulations, and providing incentives to work.

The U.S. economic recovery from the Great Recession has been led by a strong, dynamic private sector where resources are free to move to the most productive industries and workers are able to take advantage of these new job opportunities. The U.S. government invests in infrastructure, provides funding for innovation and research, promotes entrepreneurship, reevaluates its existing regulations to ensure efficiency, and provides incentives to work for specific individuals.

- Infrastructure:** To support the recovery, boost job creation and reduce unemployment, the Administration has strongly supported more investment in America's infrastructure. In his 2014 State of the Union Address, President Obama renewed his call for a major modernization of U.S. transportation infrastructure. The 2015 President's Budget includes the GROW AMERICA Act, a \$302 billion, 4-year legislative proposal to fund investments in highways, bridges, freight, public mass transit, and inter-city rail infrastructure, while creating incentives to states and metropolitan areas for productivity in transportation infrastructure deployment and use.



- **Research and Innovation:** The U.S. government's role in supporting research and innovation includes directly funding or providing incentives for research and development; providing an institutional, legal, and regulatory environment that encourages private innovation; and promoting public-private partnerships to boost advanced manufacturing.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Entrepreneurs play a critical role in supporting economic growth and creating jobs. The Administration's Startup America initiative is an effort to expand access to capital, accelerate innovation, and promote private sector efforts to help entrepreneurs in the United States and across the globe to succeed.
- **Regulations:** In 2011, President Obama issued Executive Orders that require federal agencies to routinely reevaluate the costs and benefits of existing regulations and identify whether the goals of the regulation can be achieved in a less costly or burdensome manner while also encouraging investment in new technologies and production.
- **Incentives to work:** The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) provides an incremental federal tax credit to low- and moderate-income working families and individuals that rises with additional earned income until it reaches a maximum and then phases out as income rises further. The EITC encourages and rewards work, raises living standards, and reduces poverty, especially among mothers with young children and mother with low education. Under the current law, workers without qualifying children receive very limited benefits under this program. The President has proposed providing increased benefits to assist women without dependent children, young adults not enrolled in schools, workers with disabilities, older workers, and men without a college education.

LABOR MARKETS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Labor market regulation

The Administration supports increasing the federal minimum wage to \$10.10.

The U.S. government will reduce Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) no-violation rate from 40 percent in 2014 to 35 percent in 2018 through increased enforcement.

USDOL will improve response rates to complaints filed regarding workplace safety, institute a more robust program to prevent mine accidents, and reform outdated regulations relating to federal contractors and subcontractors.

The U.S. Department of Labor is responsible for promoting and achieving compliance with labor standards to protect and enhance the welfare of the workforce. USDOL's regulatory mandate falls into four areas: (1) ensuring the implementation of labor standards; (2) enforcing the minimum wage; (3) protecting the safety and health of employees at work; and (4) assuring nondiscrimination and affirmative action by federal contractors.

- **Increasing enforcement of Key Labor Laws.** The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regulates minimum wage, overtime, and child labor, while the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) establishes workers' legal right to leave for medical and family reasons with continuation of health insurance coverage. USDOL promotes and enforces compliance with these laws. USDOL has sought to change the incentives for compliance through strategic enforcement and outreach to stakeholders. USDOL has also set ambitious compliance goals, for example, by aiming to reduce the FMLA no-violation rate identified in enforcement actions from 40 percent in 2014 to 35 percent by 2018. This no-violation rate is one indication of whether USDOL is successfully targeting non-compliant employers for investigation.
- **Raising the Minimum Wage.** In inflation-adjusted terms, the minimum wage has lost about 20 percent of its purchasing power since the early 1980s. President Obama has called on Congress to raise the federal minimum wage in stages to \$10.10 per hour and to index it to inflation thereafter. He has also called for raising the minimum wage for tipped workers for the first time in over 20 years. On February 12, 2014, the President signed an Executive Order to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 for individuals working under new federal service, construction, and concession contracts.

- **Improving Workplace Safety.** USDOL is working to improve its responsiveness to workplace safety and health complaints, including by implementing e-signatures for its electronic (web-based) complaints. USDOL is also undertaking a number of measures to prevent mining accidents, injuries, and fatalities: increased monitoring and strategic enforcement at mines with troubled compliance histories; more robust enforcement to target mines that pose the greatest risk; special initiatives, such as "Rules to Live By," which focus attention on the most common causes of mining deaths; a new regulation to lower coal miners' exposure to respirable dust; and increased outreach efforts to disseminate best practices and compliance responsibilities.
- **Ensuring Non-discrimination in Federal Contracting and Subcontracting.** USDOL enforces laws that prohibit employment discrimination by federal contractors and their subcontractors on the bases of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, and protected veteran status. On July 21, 2014, President Obama signed an executive order to extend workplace protections to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans in the federally contracted workforce, as well as prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity. Additionally, on July 31, 2014, the President signed an executive order that will require prospective federal contractors to disclose labor law violations and will give agencies more guidance on how to consider labor violations when awarding federal contracts.

Social protection

The United States has a comprehensive system of social protection; social insurance programs such as unemployment benefits, disability and age pensions, family and nutrition assistance; and the Affordable Care Act, which provides access to affordable health care coverage and guards against abusive insurance practices. The Administration is seeking to strengthen income security for all by extending emergency unemployment insurance benefits, improving retirement security, and encouraging state initiatives to provide paid medical and parental leave. It is also implementing the Affordable Care Act to ensure all have access to basic health care.

- **Extending Emergency Unemployment Insurance Benefits.** President Obama has asked Congress to extend emergency unemployment insurance benefits for the more than 2 million Americans who have been unemployed for more than 26 weeks and who have lost this vital economic lifeline.
- **Improving Retirement Security.** The President is seeking to create a new simple, safe, and affordable "starter" retirement savings account—called "MyRA"—that will be available through employers and help millions of Americans save for retirement. The 2015 President's Budget also continues to propose automatic enrollment in Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs)—or "auto-IRAs"—for employees without access to a workplace savings plan.
- **Encouraging State Paid Leave Initiatives.** While the Family and Medical Leave Act allows many workers to take job-protected unpaid time off for medical or parental leave, millions of families cannot afford to take unpaid leave. Some states have enacted policies to offer paid leave, and the Administration has urged more to follow their example. On June 30, 2014, USDOL announced an opportunity for states to participate in its Paid Leave Analysis Grant initiative with funds totaling up to \$500,000. This initiative will allow states to undertake a paid leave feasibility study to support the development or implementation of paid family and medical leave programs. Additionally, the 2015 President's Budget proposes a \$5 million State Paid Leave Fund to provide technical assistance and support to states that are considering establishing paid leave programs. The Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative would provide an additional \$100 million for this Fund.
- **Implementing the Affordable Care Act.** In addition to increased federal support to states expanding Medicaid coverage for low-income adults, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), through tax credits for insurance premium payments and cost-sharing assistance to make coverage affordable, ensures that every American can access high-quality, affordable coverage. The ACA provides health insurance to millions of Americans who would otherwise be uninsured. The combination of progressive tax credits and the Medicaid expansion under the ACA will help households afford health insurance while enabling them to smooth their consumption, supporting aggregate demand. Furthermore, the ACA will reduce the impact of job-lock where workers

remain in jobs that are poor matches because they have no other source of health insurance. This enhanced flexibility will increase the number of positions open for other workers looking for jobs.

Active labor market programs

The U.S. government will streamline its workforce system to provide jobseekers and workers with improved and targeted services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Some key features include developing state strategic plans, improving accountability and transparency, providing access to high-quality training, improving services to employers, and increasing the focus on vulnerable population groups, such as out-of-school youth and persons with disabilities.

The Administration will also seek to implement innovative reemployment initiatives, including partnering with multiple stakeholders to offer opportunities to the long-term unemployed. Under the proposed budget, the “Bridge to Work” program will provide \$2 billion to states to implement innovative reemployment strategies; the “Back to Work Partnerships” program will provide \$4 billion in work-based experiences to long-term unemployed; and \$158 million will go towards conducting improved reemployment services and assessments.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law July 22, 2014, aims to improve coordination among employment and training services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth administered by the USDOL as well as adult education and literacy programs and vocational rehabilitation state grant programs administered by the Department of Education. Under WIOA, every state will develop a four-year strategy for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and meeting the workforce need of employers. All core programs under WIOA will report on one set of common performance indicators that provide key employment information: how many workers entered and retained employment; their median wages; whether they attained a credential; their measurable skills gains; and how effective are services for employers. The strategic roles of state and local workforce boards will be strengthened and streamlined by reducing board size and adding functions that include strategies for meeting the needs of jobseekers and employers.

In recent years, the U.S. government has provided employment services and other pathways for targeted population groups. Many of these efforts focus on the over 2.8 million veterans who have separated or retired from the military, people with disabilities who require special assistance in gaining access to the labor market, and the 5.6 million disconnected youth who are out of school and out of work.

The 2015 President’s Budget proposes several new initiatives to help job seekers and workers access employment services and get the training and credentials they need for careers in in-demand industries.

- **Bridge to Work program:** The Budget provides \$2 billion in mandatory funding for states to implement innovative reemployment initiatives for unemployment insurance claimants and work-based reforms for state unemployment insurance programs. These reforms would focus on getting individuals back to work faster by providing better connections to the labor market and providing better, more intensive reemployment services.
- **Back to Work Partnerships:** The Budget funds \$4 billion for partnerships of businesses, educational institutions, training providers and workforce intermediaries to provide long-term unemployed individuals with work-based experiences that lead to employment.
- **Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments and Reemployment Services:** The Budget provides \$158 million for states to conduct eligibility reviews and provide additional reemployment services for unemployment insurance beneficiaries. This funding would support a comprehensive approach to reemployment, including strategies to encourage better linkage between unemployment insurance and the workforce development system.



Policy measures targeting disadvantaged populations in the labor market

The United States government provides a range of labor market programs and services to assist vulnerable population groups, including the long-term unemployed, women, youth, and people with disabilities.

Long-term unemployed

The U.S. government is providing \$150 million to support partnerships between employers, non-profit organizations, and our workforce systems that provide services to the long-term unemployed.

The Administration will seek to implement a new Career Pathways program that will reach one million long-term unemployed.

The U.S. government will also continue to engage with the private sector in exchanging best practices in recruiting and hiring the long-term unemployed.

Although the unemployment rate has come down from its peak during the Great Recession, a large number of workers have been without a job for an extended period of time, a phenomenon that can lead to a deterioration in workers' skills and place a strain on families and communities. Finding jobs for the long-term unemployed is a priority for the Administration. Program models that have successfully helped long-term unemployed workers re-enter the workforce historically focus on strong engagement with employers.

To counter barriers that stigmatize or otherwise disadvantage the long-term unemployed, the U.S. government is working with the private sector on a voluntary basis to address these problems. Over 300 U.S. companies have signed onto this initiative, which is committed to implementing best practices for hiring and recruiting the long-term unemployed. In addition, the U.S. government is also funding new programs that build on proven strategies, including job-training, subsidized employment, and sector-based strategies. The "Ready to Work" Partnerships grant program utilizes \$150 million in revenues to support high-performing partnerships between employers, non-profit organizations, and America's public workforce system by providing the long-term unemployed with the range of services, training, and the access they need to fill middle and high-skill jobs.

The 2015 President's Budget proposal provides resources for new public-private partnerships to help the long-term unemployed transition back into good jobs that can support their families. To help more recently displaced workers, the Budget proposes a New Career Pathways program that will reach as many as one million workers a year with a set of core services, combining key elements of two existing programs – the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers and the Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Workers Program.

Women

The U.S. government will seek to expand its support of state paid leave programs by providing additional technical assistance.

The USDOL will conduct a multistate study to develop and disseminate strategies for increasing the participation of women in high-wage, high-demand occupations in which women are underrepresented.

The U.S. government will continue our efforts in reducing the gender wage gap, occupational segregation, underrepresentation in entrepreneurship and executive positions, and the cost of childcare.

The United States government is addressing labor market challenges faced by women through the following policies and programs:

- (1) **Equal pay:** The White House created the National Equal Pay Task Force to ensure that the relevant agencies charged with enforcing laws against pay discrimination pursue a coordinated strategy to reduce the persistent pay gap between men and women. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act strengthens protections for women against pay discrimination. Additionally, women would disproportionately benefit from a federal minimum wage increase to \$10.10 since they are overrepresented in low-wage jobs.

- (2) **Occupational segregation:** Women represent a quarter of all workers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) occupations where the average wage is a third higher than non-STEM occupations. The U.S. government has introduced several initiatives to build a pathway to these jobs for women, including mentoring to support women throughout their academic and professional careers and supporting efforts to retain women in the STEM workforce. The USDOL provides assistance to employers and labor unions to help them place women in apprentices and nontraditional occupations and recently awarded \$1.8 million in grant funds on April 2, 2014 for Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations, which are technical assistance grants to community-based organizations that seek to improve in the recruitment, training, placement, and retention of women in apprenticeships and nontraditional occupations.
- (3) **Underrepresentation in entrepreneurship and executive positions:** The U.S. government continues to work to expand business opportunities for women. For example, the Small Business Administration has expanded lending to women-owned businesses and opened 10 new Women’s Business Centers around the country. SBA loans are three to five times more likely to be made to minority- and women-owned businesses than conventional small business loans made by banks. The Administration is committed to educating, training, and inspiring women to become the next generation of American leaders through public-private partnerships that aim to educate students about the harmful effects of gender stereotypes and create new mentoring programs to inspire and prepare girls and women to become leaders.
- (4) **Low returns to work once child care costs are taken into account:** Increasing child care costs have reduced the labor force participation of mothers with young children. In an effort to reduce child care expenses, three federal tax credits are available: (1) Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, which specifically offsets some of the child care costs that families pay in order to work; as well as (2) the Child Tax Credit; and the (3) Earned Income Tax Credit, which both help families meet some of the costs of raising children and provides a refundable tax credit for lower income families. In addition, the Child Care and Development Fund provides access to child care to enable low-income parents to work and achieve economic independence.
- (5) **Paid leave and work-life balance:** Three States have enacted policies to offer paid family leave. The 2015 President’s Budget includes funding to provide technical assistance and support to additional states that are considering paid leave programs. At the federal level, the USDOL promotes work-life balance and publicizes best practices in the private sector.

On June 23, 2014, the White House convened the first Summit on Working Families. Labor leaders, advocates, policymakers, business representatives, academics, and citizens joined together to discuss the challenges facing working parents and to identify those policies that promote fair pay, encourage more family-friendly workplaces, and improve and strengthen business and the economy as a whole.

Under WIOA, the USDOL will conduct a multistate study to develop and disseminate strategies to ensure that programs and activities carried out under the Act are placing individuals in jobs, education, and training that lead to equivalent pay for men and women, including strategies to increase the participation of women in high-wage, high-demand occupations, in which women are underrepresented.

Youth

The Administration will seek to provide \$2.5 billion towards funding summer and year-round job opportunities for 600,000 youth.

The U.S. government will provide students with rigorous curriculum that will teach career skills under the newly developed Youth CareerConnect Grants.

The USDOL will refocus our youth formula program to serve disconnected youth by requiring a minimum of 75 percent of funds to be used for out-of-school youth compared to 30 percent.

High school dropouts are likely to experience sustained high rates of unemployment throughout their working lives, as well as higher levels of poverty, early childbearing, and disproportionately higher incarceration rates. To help provide greater opportunities to this group, USDOL implements dropout prevention and efforts to increase the skill level of

non-college youth. USDOL programs assist disadvantaged youth, young adult offenders, and high school dropouts to prepare for employment by increasing the rate at which these individuals re-enter education and training programs and obtain industry-recognized job training skills.

Some of the programs that help youth who may have trouble seeking and maintaining meaningful employment include:

- Workforce Investment Act of 1998 Youth Activities (WIA Youth) helps youth, aged 14-21, who face barriers to employment. USDOL's largest program serves economically disadvantaged youth by preparing them both for employment and post-secondary education. Approximately 250,000 – 260,000 youth receive services annually. Over the next year, WIA Youth will be incorporated into WIOA. USDOL will refocus the youth formula program to serve disconnected youth by requiring a minimum of 75 percent of funds to be used for out-of-school youth compared to 30 percent under WIA. WIOA expands eligibility by removing the low-income requirement for out-of-school youth who have certain barriers to employment and by raising the maximum eligible age for out-of-school youth to 24 years old. USDOL will require at least 20 percent of local youth formula funds to be used for work experiences such as summer jobs, pre-apprenticeship training, on-the-job training, and internships that have academic and occupational education as a component.
- Job Corps is an intensive, highly structured education and vocational program that helps eligible at-risk youth ages 16 to 24 become more employable, responsible, and productive workers. There are 125 Job Corps centers, both residential and non-residential, across the country. In the past year, 42,793 youth were enrolled in Job Corps centers. Under WIOA, USDOL will review Job Corps operations and financial management to better inform Congress and the public on the program. Additionally, WIOA requires that the Secretary of Labor ensure that women and men have an equal opportunity to participate in Job Corps.
- YouthBuild provides academic and occupational skills training, and leadership development to youth ages 16-24. YouthBuild provides services to approximately 7,000 youth annually by engaging them in innovative alternative education programs that provide individualized instruction as they work towards earning either a General Equivalency Degree (GED) or a high school diploma. Under WIOA, YouthBuild will be amended to specifically authorize activities in in-demand industries and occupations in addition to construction and changes will be made to the percentages of funds used for supervision and training and administration. When applying for a YouthBuild grant, an eligible entity's application must describe the special outreach efforts that it will undertake to recruit eligible young women, including young women with dependent children, as participants.
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders (RExO) program provides funds for services to juvenile offenders and youth at high risk of becoming offenders. A portion of the funds are used for national and regional intermediaries that prepare young ex-offenders and school dropouts for employment.
- USDOL also recently awarded \$100 million in Youth CareerConnect grants, which will allow more than 20 schools and school districts to partner with local employers, community colleges, workforce investment boards, and other groups to provide students with rigorous academic curriculum that will impart valuable real-world career skills.

The Administration is also looking for new ways to help states and localities bring together the various youth-related funding sources to identify and test new and better ways to serve disconnected youth. This year up to 10 states or localities will be able to combine funds received from the Departments of Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Corporation for National and Community Service.

In addition to the continued work of existing youth programs and services, the 2015 President's Budget proposes \$2.5 billion in funding for Summer Jobs Plus. This program would fund summer and year-round job opportunities for 600,000 youth as well as innovation grants aimed at improving skills and career options for disadvantaged youth.



People with disabilities

The U.S. federal government will increase the representation of workers with disabilities among the federal contractors' workforce to 7 percent.

Under WIOA, USDOL will require that at least 15 percent of state vocational rehabilitation agencies' funding provide pre-employment transition services to support youth with disabilities.

People with disabilities are a source of untapped economic potential and growth, and the Administration is seeking to increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities through a complementary mix of strategies. USDOL works to promote the employment of people with disabilities within the federal government and among federal contractors. In conjunction with other federal agencies, USDOL implements Executive Order 13548, signed by the President in 2010, which requires the federal government – the largest employer in the country – to hire an additional 100,000 workers with disabilities between 2010 and 2015. As of 2012, the federal government reached its highest levels of employment of people with disabilities – 220,000 people or 12 percent of the workforce.

In September 2013, the Administration published new regulations, effective March 2014, which set a nationwide seven percent goal for the employment of people with disabilities for all federal contractors. The new rule strengthens legal provisions in Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for contractors to improve job opportunities for people with disabilities.

As a part of the “Ready to Work” report on job-driven training published on July 22, 2014, the Administration announced the formation of a cross-agency group, the “Curb Cuts to the Middle Class Initiative”, which will seek to help people with disabilities obtain and retain good jobs. In its pilot year, the group will focus on people with significant disabilities and the affirmative action and nondiscrimination obligations of federal contractors under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act. Working together, the agencies will help people with disabilities qualify for jobs offered by federal contractors; connect federal contractors with jobs to qualified job seekers with disabilities; and provide federal contractors with the resources they need to recruit, retain, and promote people with disabilities.

U.S. laws prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of disability. USDOL efforts focus on developing policies and practices that increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. For example, USDOL administers grants that enhance access to the U.S. workforce system for people with disabilities. Through the Disability Employment Initiative, people with disabilities obtain needed employment and training services. Another initiative, Employment First, works with states to advance community-based, integrated employment for youth and adults with significant disabilities. USDOL has set ambitious targets for the development of policies and practices that advance the employment of people with disabilities. For fiscal year 2015, USDOL aims to develop 82 policies and 130 effective practices in advancing disability employment.

The Department of Education (ED) administers programs that assist in educating children and youth with disabilities, provides funding for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services for youth and adults with disabilities and supports research to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. ED supports employment and independent living programs authorized by the Rehabilitation Act. ED also provides grants to colleges to support training programs for VR counselors and is taking steps to ensure that VR counselors can build and maintain relationships with employers to develop job opportunities for individuals with disabilities. ED also anticipates funding a technical assistance center that will support state VR agencies to develop systems for employer engagement, train VR counselors to use labor market and occupational information for counseling and planning purposes, and assist job-driven training providers to include individuals with disabilities. ED also funds several critical employment-related research projects focusing on improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, including through the Center for Improving Employment Outcomes and the Center on Demand-Side Strategies. Under WIOA, at least 15 percent of state VR agencies' funding will be required to provide pre-employment services to support youth with disabilities in transition from secondary to post-secondary school and employment.



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The U.S. government is committed to providing high-quality education to all Americans as a means of strengthening individual preparedness for the job market. To that end, the Administration has invested in programs to improve lifelong learning, from early childhood education through post-secondary and beyond.

School education

The Administration is committed to increase investments in early childhood education to achieve universal access to high-quality preschool for all 4 year-olds from low- and moderate-income families.

The Administration is also proposing several new initiatives — including ConnectEDucators, RESPECT, and T2L—to support teachers in the classroom.

The United States is actively pursuing educational reform to prepare students to meet the changing demands of a globalized economy. Expanding educational opportunities is critical to equipping all children with these skills and positioning them to succeed as adults. Under the leadership of the Department of Education, the Administration has increased access to preschool and spurred sweeping reforms in K-12 education that are showing results. The Administration continues to emphasize investing in early education, building on ongoing K-12 reforms, and providing new investments to help school districts prepare teachers for the digital age.

The United States is working to solve the problems associated with deep gaps of opportunity and achievement for many of America's students. Race to the Top has been its major vehicle for change. In the four years since the Obama Administration announced its first Race to the Top grants, these grants have helped to spark reforms across the country that have reached nearly half the nation's students and 1.5 million teachers in schools across the country — all for an investment that represents less than 1 percent of education spending. President Obama has committed to a new investment in preschool education that supports universal access to high-quality preschool for all 4-year olds from low- and moderate-income families and creates an incentive for states to serve additional children. Through the Race to the Top program, Preschool Development Grants help states to develop, enhance, or expand access to high-quality preschool programs for children from low- and moderate-income families. Pre-school for All is a new voluntary preschool federal-state partnership administered by the Department of Education that will build upon and strengthen existing state systems to provide all low- and moderate-income 4-year-olds with high-quality, publicly-funded preschool. Preschool for All-eligible states must have high-quality program standards, the ability to link preschool data with K-12 data, and early learning and development standards that aim to ensure children leave preschool for success in kindergarten.

The Administration has proposed significant investments that support teachers and leaders in classrooms and communities. ConnectEDucators would support educators' transition to using technology and data to personalize learning and improve college- and career-ready instruction and assessment. The program aims to ensure that teachers are well prepared to use high-speed Internet and technology resources in a way that improves classroom instruction and student learning. Recognizing Educational Success, Professional Excellence, and Collaborative Teaching (RESPECT) is an initiative that will provide targeted support for teachers and leaders by improving preparation and early career assistance, giving teachers and leaders opportunities to develop and advance as they lead the transition to college- and career-ready standards, and ensuring that teachers have a supportive environment built around shared collaboration. Teach to Lead (T2L) is an initiative that will foster ambitious commitments for teachers to take up leadership roles without leaving the classroom. The goal is to ensure that when important decisions are being made about the work teachers do, they are there to help set the direction for their classrooms, schools, the profession, and ultimately ensure students have the best opportunities to learn.



Apprenticeships, vocational training and higher education

The Administration will seek to revitalize the system of Registered Apprenticeships through new investments and calling on Congress for the resources to double the number of Registered Apprenticeships over the next five years.

The Administration is committed to strengthening community colleges and has set a target of an additional five million graduates from community colleges by 2020.

The Administration will also increase access to college for low-income students, help graduates with loan repayment, provide an American Opportunity Tax Credit, and keep student interest rates low.

The Administration is seeking reforms in the federal government's aid to career and technical education (CTE) that are designed to help ensure that all students exit CTE programs well-prepared for further education or employment in high-skill and high-demand occupations, including for technical jobs that are currently going unfilled. The reforms include improving the alignment between CTE and labor market needs, increasing collaboration among secondary and postsecondary CTE programs and business and industry, and strengthening the law's accountability requirements so that states and local programs are held accountable for providing CTE students with access to postsecondary education; increasing their attainment of a postsecondary credential, certificate, or degree; and placing them in employment.

To improve the educational attainment of adults who lack a high school credential or proficiency in English, the Administration is promoting the integration of adult education with occupational education and training, as well as the development of career pathways systems that make it easier for participants to enter and progress in a career. The Administration is also encouraging states to raise the standards of their adult education programs so that participants are prepared to enter postsecondary education without need for remediation.

In his 2014 State of the Union address, the President announced that Vice President Joseph Biden would lead an across-the-board reform of America's training programs, aimed at creating more on-the-job training for existing workers, more apprenticeships for young workers, and business-education partnerships that produce more students with the skills and credentials employers need today. A Presidential memorandum called for the Secretaries of Labor, Education, and Commerce, led by the Vice President, to conduct a government-wide review of federal employment and training programs. The Vice President's report from this review (publicly available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/ready-to-work>) includes an action plan to make the workforce and training system more focused, integrated, and effective.

To ensure that students and workers receive the education and training they need, and to provide greater security for the middle class, the Administration is working to make college more accessible, affordable, and attainable for all American families. To that end, the Administration has expanded federal support to help more students afford college by:

- Expanding the number of Pell Grants, or federally-funded grants for low-income, first time college students, by 50 percent thereby providing college access to millions of additional low-income and middle-class students across the country;
- Helping graduates manage student loan debt through the "Pay as You Earn" Program, an income-based repayment plan that caps graduates' monthly loan payments at 10 percent of their income;
- Providing the American Opportunity Tax Credit, which enables Americans to deduct certain costs of education or continuing education from their federal income taxes; and
- Keeping student loan interest rates low, particularly on those loans subsidized by the federal government.

The Administration has also sought to strengthen America's 1,100 community colleges and set a target of an additional five million graduates from community colleges by 2020. Community colleges are sites of continuing education or vocational education for workers. Working in partnership with states, communities, and businesses, community colleges promote the dual goal of academic and on-the-job preparedness for the next generation of American workers. The Administration has invested in several new programs to strengthen these functions of community colleges.

As part of the Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative, the 2015 President's Budget includes a proposal for a 4-year Community College Job-Driven Training Fund, which would include a total of \$2 billion dollars to expand apprenticeships in America and double the number of Registered Apprenticeships over the next 5 years. The USDOL administers and oversees Registered Apprenticeship programs, which are public-private partnerships providing structured, "earn and learn" training in over 1,000 occupations. Apprentices complete hands-on career learning as paid employees of the apprenticeship sponsors, as well as industry-specific classroom education, leading to nationally-recognized skill certifications. WIOA includes provisions designed to better integrate apprenticeships into the public workforce system and expand access to them. In addition, the White House recently convened a Summit on American Apprenticeship and announced the upcoming fall 2014 launch of a \$100 million American Apprenticeships Grants competition.

Additionally, the Skills for America's Future initiative brings together companies and community colleges to help workers gain new skills and will make the United States more competitive in the global economy. To date the program has provided 500,000 trainees the skills they need to succeed while equipping businesses with talented and skilled employees to help them thrive.



4. Monitoring of commitments

This section reports on the implementation of the United States' commitments made under recent G20 presidencies, including the Los Cabos Jobs and Growth Plan and the Saint Petersburg Action Plan. It highlights the major measures the United States has taken to address its commitments, as well as identifies the steps it has taken to follow through on strategies endorsed by G20 Labor and Employment Ministers.

Los Cabos and Saint Petersburg commitments

The U.S. will enhance the growth potential of the economy and continue to make progress on the recovery of the labor market, in particular for the long-term unemployed, by investing in the training and skills of U.S. workers.

As previously noted, a key element to the delivery of public employment services is to reduce the number of long-term unemployed. USDOL programs support training in emerging industry sectors to help workers become more competitive and equip them with the credentials and skills needed to compete in the global labor market. In FY 2013, USDOL provided technical assistance to the workforce system to improve credential attainment, which can increase individual earning potential.

Youth employment, training and quality apprenticeships

USDOL worked to increase the number of youth participants earning industry-recognized credentials through investments in education and training programs under the WIA Youth formula program, Job Corps, YouthBuild, and Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career (TAACCCT) grants. Registered Apprenticeship, Job Corps, WIA Youth, and YouthBuild programs exceeded their degree or certificate attainment targets in Program Year 2012, while the Job Corps attained its target for the placement in employment, education, or training measure by showing significant gains over the previous two program years.

In Program Year 2012, USDOL funded and began to enroll participants in the “Face Forward” grant program. “Face Forward” conveys the idea of youth leaving their past transgressions behind and looking forward towards a promising future. Through diversion and/or record expungement strategies, these grants give youth a chance to succeed in the workplace and to avoid the stigma of a juvenile record. The “Face Forward” grants offer organizations the opportunity to develop programs that address this issue while developing the skills and opportunity youth need to move forward successfully in the workforce.

Women

In September 2013, the USDOL announced a final rule that will extend the FLSA minimum wage and overtime protections to most direct care workers working in private homes to provide care services to elderly people and people with illnesses, injuries, or disabilities. These are the same protections that already cover millions of American workers, including those who do the exact same work but in a nursing home or other institution. Of the nearly two million workers who are affected by this final rule, approximately 90 percent are women. Furthermore, the USDOL is revising the definition of “companionship services” to clarify and narrow the duties that fall within the term and is prohibiting third party employers, such as home care agencies, from claiming the companionship or live-in exemption in an attempt avoid paying domestic service workers the federal minimum wage and overtime. Effective January 1, 2015, these exemptions for companionship services and live-in domestic service employees are limited to the individual, family, or household using the services.

In FY 2013, USDOL eliminated outdated guidance that restricted the types of evidence and analysis that the agency's compliance officers could use when reviewing federal contractor pay practices — guidance that had made it more difficult for agency investigators to find and address pay discrimination. In addition, USDOL clarified its new procedures and analysis in a written directive and other compliance assistance materials and increased its emphasis on identifying systemic compensation discrimination.



The USDOL has stepped up its enforcement efforts in high-risk sectors such as the healthcare, restaurant, and garment industries, which employ large populations of vulnerable workers—many of whom are women—and where the USDOL has found significant and widespread labor violations. Since 2009, USDOL has recovered nearly \$335 million in back wages for 478,580 workers in approximately 55,880 cases nationwide in low-wage industries, including industries in which women are likely to work.

In response to the persistently high rates of injuries among the largely female healthcare workforce, the USDOL launched a new emphasis program in 2013 to increase inspections at nursing homes and residential care facilities. USDOL has joined with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to develop a set of new targeted educational resources for healthcare workers and their employers about safe work practices.

In fiscal year 2013, the USDOL began a five-year study to design, implement, and evaluate a demonstration pilot focused on assessing strategies for overcoming barriers encountered by individuals desiring employment in non-traditional occupations.

